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Canada's New Government Takes Major Steps to Support Seniors

ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, March 5, 2007 – Today the Honourable Marjory LeBreton, Leader of the Government in the Senate and Secretary of State (Seniors) and the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, further demonstrated Canada's New Government's commitment to seniors by announcing the creation of a National Seniors Council, while at the same time providing nearly $14 million in funding to seniors across Canada through the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

"Seniors helped build this country and made it what it is today," said Minister LeBreton. "During the last federal election, our government promised to create a Council to allow Canadian seniors to have a say in the issues that mattered to them. By establishing this Council, we have fulfilled a key campaign commitment and will work to deliver real results to Canada's seniors."

The National Seniors Council will advise the Government on seniors' issues of national importance. It will help ensure that government policies, programs and services meet the evolving needs of seniors. Its members will report to Minister Solberg, in light of his responsibilities for seniors, and to the Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health, in recognition of the importance of health-related issues for older Canadians. The Ministers will be supported by Minister LeBreton, who will work closely with the Council in its day-to-day operations.

"The Seniors Council will build on the work that Canada's New Government has already been doing to improve the health and well-being of our seniors, including increasing the refundable medical expense by more than 30 per cent to $1000 a year and improving the financial security of seniors by reducing the amount of taxes they owe," added Mr. Steven Fletcher, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.

The Ministers welcomed Mr. Jean-Guy Soulière as the first Chair of the new National Seniors Council. A selection process for the remaining board members has been launched, and a notice of vacancy can be found at www.appointments-nominations.gc.ca.

Ministers Solberg and LeBreton also announced nearly $14 million in funding for 775 projects across Canada through the New Horizons for Seniors Program, which will help seniors lead active lives and participate in their communities.

"Canada's New Government has listened to seniors across Canada express their interest in becoming more active to make long-lasting differences in their communities," said Minister Solberg. "In response, we are proud to invest in 775 projects across Canada through our New Horizonsgrants program and ensure that our seniors can contribute to community life in ways they feel will make a difference."

The New Horizons for Seniors Program provides grants to support a range of community-based projects across Canada that encourage seniors to contribute to their communities through social participation and active living. Projects support broad national objectives and regional priorities.

In just one year, Canada's New Government has been making a difference to make significant

improvements to the lives of seniors by:

- creating the position of Secretary of State (Seniors);
- providing tax relief by allowing pension income splitting for pensioners, beginning in the 2007 tax year;
- providing tax relief by increasing the age credit by $1,000 (from $4,066 to $5,066), effective in the 2006 tax year;
- providing tax relief by increasing the maximum amount of eligible pension income that can be claimed under the pension income credit to $2000 from $1,000, putting almost $900 million back in the hands of seniors over the next two years and removing 85,000 pensioners from the tax rolls;
- increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement maximum benefit, benefiting more than 50,000 seniors, and proposing legislation to make it easier for seniors to apply for and receive the Supplement;
- increasing the Refundable Medical Expense Supplement tax credit by more than 30 per cent to $1000;
- expanding the Compassionate Care Benefit, making more Canadians eligible; and
- introducing a targeted Initiative for older workers

Other Government of Canada seniors-focused initiatives include projects to make cities more accessible for seniors, help seniors become prepared for emergencies, prevent fall-related injuries, and develop guidelines on seniors' mental health issues.

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This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

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Backgrounder
New Horizons for Seniors Program

The New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) provides funding to support a range of community-based projects across Canada that encourage seniors to contribute to their communities through social participation and active living. By focusing on the important role of seniors in Canada's

communities, the program also gives seniors more opportunity to share their wealth of knowledge and help others.

The New Horizons for Seniors Program was launched in 2004 and has proven to be popular, funding 1,700 projects across Canada in just three years. Due to project successes, the program's budget will be almost $20 million in 2007.

Funded projects are inspired, implemented, and led by seniors; they support broad national objectives and regional priorities set by Review Committees in each province. Review Committees consist of members who are active in seniors' and community issues and include representation from the federal and provincial or territorial governments. The committees also review and recommend proposals for funding. Individual proposals are eligible for up to $25,000 in funding, and the maximum length of a project is one year.

Seven hundred and seventy-five projects were approved for funding of nearly $14 million.

For more information, please consult: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/isp/horizons/toc.shtml.

Backgrounder
The Role of the National Seniors Council

The National Seniors Council has been established to advise Canada's New Government, through the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development and the Minister of Health, on all matters related to the health, well-being and quality of life of seniors, including the opportunities and challenges arising from a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse aging population. The Ministers will be supported by the Secretary of State (Seniors), the Honourable Marjory LeBreton, who will work closely with the Council.

The 12-member Council will be composed of seniors, representatives of organizations that serve the needs or interests of seniors, and experts from fields of study related to seniors and aging. The members are expected to serve for a term of up to three years.

Mr. Jean-Guy Soulière has been named as the Chair of the Council. He is currently Executive Director of the Federal Superannuates National Association as well as Chair of the Congress of National Seniors' Organizations.

The federal government has launched a selection process to seek candidates interested in serving as members of the Council. These part-time Governor-in-Council positions will be advertised in the *Canada Gazette*, and posted on the Government's Web site, to ensure an open and transparent process. Once Council members are appointed, their names will be made public in the *Canada Gazette*.

The Council may meet several times annually as deemed necessary by the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, the Minister of Health, and the Secretary of State (Seniors). The Department of Human Resources and Social Development will provide Secretariat support to the Council.

As directed by the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, the Minister of Health, and the Secretary of State (Seniors), the National Seniors Council will:

- advise on current and emerging issues and opportunities related to the quality of life, health

and well-being of seniors, both now and in the future;
- as needed, undertake activities such as commissioning research, convening expert panels and round tables, and holding consultative meetings; and
- deliver well-balanced advice, taking into account the views of experts, seniors, organizations and groups that provide seniors programs and services, provincial/territorial advisory bodies on seniors, and other relevant stakeholders and interested parties.

Backgrounder
Biography of Mr. Jean-Guy Soulière,
National Seniors Council Chair

After a successful career with the federal public service, **Mr. Jean-Guy Soulière** joined the Federal Superannuates National Association (FSNA) in 1994 as Executive Director. He holds a degree from the University of Ottawa and is fluently bilingual.

With more than 140,000 members and 84 branches, the FSNA represents pensioners and their spouses and survivors, from the Canadian Forces, the Public Service of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The FSNA also represents pensioners who were federally appointed judges.

Selected Professional Associations

- Chair and Spokesperson for the Congress of National Seniors' Organizations since 2002
- Member of the Public Service Pension Advisory Committee
- Member of the Board of Directors of the Recreation Association of Ottawa (the largest recreation complex in Canada)
- Member of the Association of Professional Executives
- Member of the Canadian Society of Association Executives
- Honourary life member of the International Personnel Management Association and was the National President in 1986

Selected Volunteer Associations

- Past member of the Ottawa District Board of the Canadian National Institute of the Blind
- Past President of the Ottawa-Carleton Minor Football League

Selected Federal Government Experience

- Director General of Human Resources, Labour Canada
- Director General of Human Resources, Agriculture Canada
- Director General of Human Resources, Consumer and Corporate Affairs
- Director General of Regional Operations, Public Service Commission

Other Experience and Achievements
Part-time lecturer: University of Ottawa, Université du Québec à Hull

Mr. Soulière is married to Lise. He has two sons and four grandchildren.

Backgrounder
New Horizons for Seniors Program (2006-2007)
FUNDING BREAKDOWN BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY

All times are reflected in Atlantic time
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